

8 (Amended). The minivan as set forth in claim 7 wherein said [means] load brakes the fall of the ramp while the ramp is extended [manually] without applying power to said motor.

9 (Amended). The minivan as set forth in claim 8 wherein said [means] load includes a resistor for dissipating current generated by said motor.

10 (Amended). The minivan as set forth in claim 9 [wherein said means includes] and further including a diode in series with said resistor for blocking current through said resistor when said ramp is raised [manually] and the motor is driven in the opposite direction from when the ramp is lowered.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

It is requested that formal drawings await an indication of allowable subject matter.

Claims 1–10 were rejected as indefinite. Applicants have attempted to respond to the Examiner's criticisms, with the exception of "the floor." Reconsideration of this objection is requested. Claims are addressed to those of skill in the art. Even those unskilled in the art of making ramps for minivans know that a minivan has a floor. In reciting a minivan, one is necessarily reciting a floor in the minivan. It is not seen that adding words to the preamble to recite a floor will tell the reader anything he did not already know. Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to describe the coupling. The recitation of claim 4 does not seem indefinite. The Examiner seems to be saying that the claim does not particularly recite one of a host of ways of implementing the function, e.g. optical coupling, mechanical coupling. This relates to breadth, not definiteness. Insofar as the invention is concerned, it does not matter how the position is sensed as long as there is an indication that a particular position has been reached.

The objection to "braking" and the rejection of the claims on the Tidrick patent could be interpreted to mean that the Examiner does not recognize "dynamic braking" as a well known term in electric motor arts. Dynamic braking uses an

electric motor as a generator and converts the generated electricity to heat with a suitable load. (Some electric cars return the current to the car's battery, which merely postpones conversion to heat). The claims have essentially been made repetitious by spelling out what dynamic braking is. "Damping", as used in the Tidrick patent, does not refer to braking as such but to a restriction on motion, e.g. as produced by a shock absorber. Dynamic braking can lock an electric motor (see specification, page 5, line 1); damping cannot.

Claims 1-10 were rejected as unpatentable over Tidrick et al. in view of Oudsten et al. or Peterson, Jr., et al. The Tidrick et al. patent discloses a fold out ramp. The Oudsten et al. patent discloses a slide out ramp for a bus. The Peterson, Jr., et al. patent discloses a flip-over ramp for a bus. A bus has an almost unlimited amount of room compared to a minivan. The three ramp constructions are completely different. A flip-over ramp would crush the occupant of a wheelchair after he entered the minivan or, if not crush, at least firmly hold him in place. It is respectfully submitted that there is no basis for the combination other than applicants' claims.

The alleged motivation for the combination, reduce potential hazards, makes it sound as though drive mechanisms are left exposed, wherever they are located. They are not.. A flip-over ramp in a minivan does not seem consistent with reducing potential hazards.

Applicants have improved folding ramps for minivans by locating the drive mechanism for the ramp under the floor of the minivan. The prior art does not disclose or suggest this improvement.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul F. Wille
Reg. No. 25,274
Attorney for Applicant